

■ Demands federal say on spending ■ Population growth pressures housing ■ Urges green design rules

Rudd tackles urban planning mess

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The federal government is planning to use its financial power to exert control over housing development, land release, building codes and urban transport infrastructure to ensure that cities meet the challenges of population growth and climate change.

Under a plan due to be con-

BUILDING BLOCKS

'Hopefully the new system will rework the constipated planning processes that have so frustrated the private sector.'

— Robert Harley, page 4

sidered at the Council of Australian Governments meeting in December, federal government infrastructure funding would be linked to a new

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national plan for major cities, which will include national benchmarks.

In a blunt message to state and local administrations, Prime Minister

Kevin Rudd told the Business Council of Australia annual dinner in Sydney last night: "If the commonwealth is to foot any significant part of the urban infrastructure bill, it will legitimately expect to have confidence in the integrity of the strategic planning system in our major cities."

"With Australia facing rapid growth in the decades ahead, the time has come for the Australian govern-

ment to take a much greater national responsibility for improving the long-term planning of our major cities."

Property Council of Australia chief executive Peter Verwer welcomed the move last night. "This is very good," he said. "This is what we have been asking for. The Prime Minister wants to rewire and reboot Australia's planning system."

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